

OCT 23 1958

Spy Scare

The publicly available facts suggest at least some Soviet penetration into the NATO apparatus. German Rear Admiral Hermann Luedke, deputy head of NATO logistics, committed suicide after snapshots of NATO secret documents turned up on a roll of film he left for development with a Bonn photographic shop.

Nahit Imre, a Turk, was caught in the act of photographing NATO documents and is now under intensive interrogation by Turkish counter-intelligence. And there has been a rash of official suicides, including Major General Horst Wendtland, acting head of German security services, Lieutenant Colonel Johannes Grimm of the German defense ministry, and former Italian Air Minister Renato Sandalli.

The official line on the suicides is that they are unrelated, which would imply the absence of a spy ring. The psychological explanation offered is that suicidally inclined individuals are often prompted to do themselves in by other suicides. In individual cases, official suicides were described as flowing from "instability for years," and from cancer of the throat. Perhaps. But the count of official suicides since the scare began stands at five Germans, one Italian and the Polish-born, French wife of

a sergeant in the United States Army.

If, in fact, NATO secrets are in Soviet hands, this could mean that the Soviet government knew how NATO would react or not react to its suppression of Czechoslovakia. Also it could mean that nuclear weapons will have to be shifted to new locations.

To be sure, counterintelligence—the art of keeping one's information and intentions out of the hands of the enemy — is a difficult task under any circumstances, and especially so in the case of the 15-member NATO alliance. Even an intensive security investigation will not necessarily turn up the fact that an individual is working for the other side; and persons can always begin to do so after the completion of a periodic security examination. In the case of NATO, its own security officers must rely heavily on the security services of individuals' home countries.

Still, given the threatening Soviet posture, the current spy scare could not have come at a worse time. And it is only the latest of a series of such penetrations, such as that of Swedish Colonel Stig Wennerstrom, a Soviet masterspy. The NATO security officers will have to do a better job somehow of keeping NATO secrets out of other people's hands.